

REPORT ON CONSULTANCY

(June 20-August 31, 1961)

Mr. Noble:

I submit the following report on my consultancy in the Historical Office during this summer (June 20-August 31, 1961):

1. Purpose. According to the terms of my appointment, I was to examine the procedures followed and advise the Director "with regard to the adequacy of coverage of the sources used and the methods of research followed by the Office," and to make "such proposals in connection therewith as may seem justified."

2. Method of Work. In order to become fully acquainted with the problems and procedures in respect to the compilation, editing, and publication of the volumes on Foreign Relations of the United States, I was first given a thorough introduction to the various records, files of documents, indexes and other finding devices, and library collections and facilities within the State Department and available to the Historical Office staff.

Secondly, I conferred with every member of the Foreign Relations staff, and with some others, about the problems and procedures involved in the compilation of these volumes. Although there were some differences of opinion with respect to the precise nature of these matters to the historical tasks, there was virtual agreement on the nature of the problems involved, and I secured from these experts in historical research a far better understanding of the problems and difficulties with which they are confronted.

Thirdly, I reviewed some of the published Foreign Relations volumes, including Conference volumes; some page-proof (especially 1942, I. Europe), some galley (especially 1943, II. Europe); some compilations in various stages of preparation for publication (1945, Germany or Ours; 1945, Austria; 1945, Near and Middle East); and the plan of tentative contents for volumes in the course of compilation (1945). All this was for the purpose of noticing the scope, the source (whether from the Central Files or other sources); possible range, variety and relative importance of subjects or stories, extent of non-political or non-State Department material (e.g. economic and military questions; Presidential, War or Defense, Intelligence, etc. documents).

Fourthly, I examined carefully a considerable number and variety of documentary collections--the Algiers Post Files (the so-called Murphy Files) for 1943 (12 boxes); the European Affairs Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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IPS by M. Russel II Date 19/03/12

Office or Lot Files for 1943 (6 boxes); some of the Dumbarton Oaks and other pre-United Nations papers in the International Organization Lot Files (10 out of the 104 boxes of this material); papers relating to the Allied Control Council for Austria (9 folders); some of the European Affairs Lot Files relating to the Occupation of Germany (2 boxes, 80 folders, principally for 1945 and 1947, but with occasional papers for earlier years). I tried also, without actually reading many papers to become reasonably well acquainted with the Central Files, the Index Cards, and various aids and finding devices for facilitating the use of these files.

Finally, I read a number of memoranda on various matters, including clearance problems; attended staff meetings; and discussed numerous questions with individual staff members, some brought to my attention by them and some raised by me out of my examination of these papers and compilations. As a result of these weeks of study and observation, the following comments are made on what seem to me to be the major problems in respect to the Foreign Relations series:

3. Quantity of Documentation. There is nothing quite so clear as the vast and growing amount of documentation that must be examined by those who compile the Foreign Relations volumes. A measurement of the Index Cards to the Central Files alone, and exclusively by countries, shows, for the years 1940-1944, 3190-1/4 inches of these cards for Latin America, 1467-1/4 inches of cards for Western Europe, 1351-1/4 for the British Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, and the Far East, 473-1/2 for the Near East and Africa, or a total of 6432-1/4 inches of these index cards covering a period of five years. Another measurement, based on the number of cards per inch, shows, with reference only to the correspondence to and from London, 4,680 cards for 1934, 35,955 cards for 1944, 20,280 cards for 1949. Well over 400,000 documents were added to the Department's subject files in each year from 1955 to 1960. A single compiler in one year examined 3,603 index cards and 7,463 papers relating to three countries (Bulgaria, Japan, USSR). These statistics, incomplete and limited as they are, give some indication of the enormous task now involved in the compilation of these volumes. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the amount of documentation will continue to increase. There may be some decrease for certain areas, such as Latin America, with the return to more normal relationships, but this will certainly be offset by the continuing development of multilateral agencies and regional and global relationships.

4. Complexity of Documentation. Much more of a problem than the mere quantity is the increasing complexity of the documentation. The war and post-war events have brought about a situation in which the State Department, once exclusively responsible for foreign policy, is now only one of the agencies involved, others being particularly

the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Information Agency, the Treasury Department, and others. The State Department itself has been required to engage in activities of a much broader scope than before, its own documentation thus becoming more complex (involving economic and military, as well as political considerations), while the documentation of these agencies is also closely related to the actual foreign policy as determined and carried on.

The emphasis on multilateral (regional and global) relationships has produced a mass of documentation quite different from and much more difficult to classify and arrange than that based largely on the simpler bilateral relationships. This change has also, of course, vastly increased the quantity as well. Thus, the documentation relating to the pre-United Nations period (Atlantic Charter, Dumbarton Oaks Conversations, the State Department preparatory work, etc.) is contained in 104 boxes, and an Inventory of these records, prepared by Dorothy B. Thomas, of the Reference and Documents Section of the Bureau of International Organization, makes up a booklet of 35 pages; the Department's documentation of the United Nations itself for the years 1946-1949 occupies 49 files drawers and deals with 112 different subjects; and another Inventory of the records of the various wartime conferences of Heads of State, Council of Foreign Ministers, and similar meetings, prepared by Alycedale Collins and Hilda Mach, of the Records Service Center, comprises a booklet of 132 pages listing the contents of 243 boxes.

The documents relating to the Austrian Control Council, contained in nine larger folders, reveal the intermingling of political, military, and economic questions; in the Central Files there are at least 45 drawers of documents dealing entirely or largely with economic problems in Occupied Germany; in the Bonn Post Files there are 182 boxes of documents relating exclusively to the control of I. G. Farben, involving economic, financial, accounting, and legal questions; while in the European Affairs Lot Files there are in only two boxes 80 folders containing documents relating to German Occupation problems, principally in 1945, that include Council of Foreign Ministers' directives, restitution of property, reparations, economic unity of Germany, Rhineland-Ruhr, the Saar Valley, railways, the Polish boundary, and many others, including, significantly, a memorandum on "State-War Relations in respect to the Control of Germany." The intermingling of political, territorial, economic, and military considerations in our post-war foreign policy is thus clearly revealed, with the consequent complexity of documentation which the compilers and editors have to put into proper perspective to produce a coherent account.

5. Use of Post and Lot (Office) Files. There is some difference of opinion as to the use that should be made of these papers, which are not in the Central Files. They are available at irregular intervals, the Post Files not being available at all, I believe, until 1955;

they are often very poorly classified and arranged; they are not indexed and therefore take considerable time. Sometimes their examination yields very little in addition to what is found in the indexed Central Files.

I am, however, convinced from my own sampling of these files that they may be and often are the source of very important documentation that has somehow not been included in the Central Files, and it is my opinion that they ought to be used rather assiduously. For example, the Algiers Post Files for 1943, often referred to as the Murphy Files, contain in 12 boxes a number of documents that filled in the record found in the Central Files and illuminated the account of the Giraud-de Gaulle problem. The Bonn Post Files have 182 boxes of documents on the I. G. Farben problem alone; and the European Affairs Lot Files contain 80 large folders of documents relating to the economic aspects of German occupation. These are samples only, and for some other matters similar files would not doubt be less important. To some extent the individual compiler, who knows his subject, may sense whether or how thorough a search need be made of these records, but they should by all means be taken seriously into account.

6. Scope and Selectivity. The vast increase in the amount of documentation has required considerable emphasis on the need for selectivity. It is obviously impossible any longer to publish all the documents if the volumes are to be kept within reasonable compass and be produced within a reasonable period. The emphasis on a greater degree of selectivity is therefore quite necessary and proper. However, the directive under which the Historical Office operates should also be emphasized, namely, that these Foreign Relations volumes should include "all documents needed to give a comprehensive record of the major foreign policy decisions within the range of the Department of State's responsibilities, together with appropriate materials concerning the facts which contributed to the formulation of policies; and that this record should also, if possible, "show the alternatives presented to the Department before the decision was made." It seems to me quite clear that the first and principal consideration in compiling and editing these volumes must be to produce a complete and accurate record. The size and number of volumes and the speed of production are important but secondary considerations.

This means, in the first place, that all State Department documents relating to major foreign policy questions, including the Post and Lot Files, must be taken into account. In this connection, every compiler has to contend with the problem of occasional missing documents, which may have been misplaced in the files, drawn out and indefinitely retained by some officer, and even completely lost through lack of adequate records. It would seem highly desirable that improved methods be used for recording, copying, and maintaining the Central Files so as to avoid this problem and save the time involved in searching for missing documents.

Secondly, the principle of a thorough and accurate record means now, in my opinion, that use must also be made of documents produced and controlled by Government agencies other than the State Department, especially of Presidential, Defense, and Intelligence papers. The use of such outside papers was contemplated in the directive noted above; it is essential in respect to the Conference volumes, occupation and other post-War policies; but it seems to me desirable in respect to most major matters in view of their broad and complex nature. It may be regrettable that the State Department is no longer the exclusive agency in determining our foreign policy, but that is a situation which must be reflected to the extent necessary in the Foreign Relations volumes.

All of this means greater difficulty in compiling these volumes. The vast amount of documentation requires also emphatic application of the principle of selectivity--that is, selecting the essential documents for final publication, summarizing or annotating those of lesser importance, and eliminating those not essential to a meaningful and accurate record. It should be pointed out, however, that the State Department has from time clearly recognized the need of such selectivity, first in deciding what are "major foreign policy decisions" deserving of documentation at all, and, secondly, in the actual selection of documents for final publication; and this deliberate selection has been emphasized and increased in response to the suggestions of the Advisory Committee. For example, the documentation on Refugees (1945) was reduced by 40 per cent as the original selection went through reworking into working documents and final review; in another case involving three countries, more than 7,000 documents originally examined were reduced to about 1,300 for working purposes, and less than one half of these, or about 7 per cent of the original selection, were actually compiled; in still another case, relating to the Far East (1943), only about 5 per cent of the papers in the Central Files were taken out for working purposes and less than 2 per cent were used in the compilation.

While these figures suggest careful and even drastic selection in some cases, they reveal nothing about the principles involved. Everyone agrees that some subjects are less important than other subjects, but it is difficult to list those subjects without qualification as to time and circumstance; there are times when certain countries are so unimportant that no documentation is necessary at all, but it is quite impossible to list these countries for all time. It would be my conclusion, after reviewing a number of papers and compilations, that such matters as individual claims, passport and visa problems, rights of business firms, disposition of archives, air transport privileges, tele-communication stations--in general, matters concerning private individuals and companies--might generally be omitted, or be treated with an editorial note; but there are circumstances that make some of these of considerable public importance and deserving of documentation. There is no way of avoiding the best judgment of the individual compiler in respect to selection.

Another feature of this selective process is that no time is saved by selection (except as certain few subjects might be eliminated in advance), for in order to decide what documents to eliminate or to reduce to an editorial note or to summarize, the compiler must look at all the documents. Greater selectivity should reduce the number and size of the volumes, but can hardly reduce the time of the stuff to a perceptible extent.

7. Conference Volumes. The compilation of separate Conference volumes has produced some problems, particularly because some were compiled and published ahead of the regular volumes for the years covered. That required background material in the Conference volumes, some of which might more properly have been included within the regular volumes, and raises the question whether to reprint documents in the regular volumes in order to get a connected account or to permit a hop-skip-and-jump account in the regular volumes and refer to the documents already printed in the Conference volumes. Problems such as these might have been avoided if both Conference and regular volumes had been compiled at the same time, but this was impossible under the circumstances. It is my view that the production of separate Conference volumes is in itself desirable in view of the special and multilateral nature of those proceedings, and I should like to encourage their continued production in that form; but I would hope that so far as possible, they be compiled at the same time as the regular volumes in order to coordinate the materials somewhat better.

8. Publication Programs: Time Lag. My own views with respect to publication of Foreign Relations have changed somewhat as I have observed the problems involved. The fact that the volumes are now approximately twenty years behind currency is deplorable from every point of view, and I would urge that every effort be made to narrow that gap or at least to prevent it from becoming wider. The situation must be faced realistically, however, and I do not find any reason to suppose that this time-lag can ever be maintained in the immediate future. It does seem to me much more important to emphasize the need for a comprehensive and accurate record, no matter what it may cost in respect to time of publication. Although one should not encourage at all a wider time-lag, and there must be a point at which the line should be held, that point is probably not yet reached in any crisis sense. In fact, compilation, which is approximately 16 years behind currency, is still ahead of some important sources, such as the Truman papers. It seems to me more important to use those known sources, even if this means further delay in publication. Also, the problems of clearance should be ended somewhat as time goes on.

9. Clearance. The clearance problem continues to be one of the most difficult, requiring time and forcing delay beyond what is reasonable. The problem is difficult within the State Department, and becomes much more difficult as Defense documents and even Intelligence documents are or should be used in order to prepare an authentic record. My attention has been called to cases where clearance has been refused even though the documents themselves had been declassified. The increasing time-lag should ease

this problem somewhat, but the problem continues such that serious effort ought to be made to get a White House ruling to govern all agencies. It seems to me that with persons on the White House Staff who are familiar with scholarly research and sympathetic to the production of an honest record, the time may now be propitious for a thorough consideration of this problem. I would earnestly suggest that the appropriate officials of the Bureau and the Department be persuaded to approach Mr. Schlesinger on this matter.

10. Planning. The Advisory Committee has suggested the desirability of planning these Foreign Relations volumes for a period of years in advance of compilation. This presumably implies considering the number of volumes, the content of those volumes, relative emphasis on the various subjects, the arrangement of the subject-matter; and might involve some changes, perhaps even drastic changes, in form and content. I know that the staff has given a good deal of attention to this matter, and I am not prepared to make specific suggestions at this time. It does seem to me, however, that in view of the time-lag, it should be possible to survey the general situation over a period of five years in the light of present knowledge of events, make a preliminary study of the documentation involved, and out of that come to some general conclusions with respect to what should be produced and how best to deal with the problems. Of course no one assumes that such planning can necessarily be carried out exactly as planned; there must be opportunity for adaptation to circumstances.

11. Staff. The staff problem is the crucial one, as I see it; and by that I do not refer to its quality but to its number. I have the highest admiration for the scholarship, devotion to duty, and integrity of every member of the staff; it is a group which any University Department of History or Political Science should be proud to claim. But this staff is confronted with an impossible task, and must be substantially enlarged if these Foreign Relations volumes are to be produced as they should be. The proposal of the Advisory Committee for additional staff seems to me much too modest, and I would suggest at least six additional members are essential in order to maintain the present time-lag of twenty years. I see no other solution to the problem.

In view of the increased importance of economic questions, it would no doubt be desirable to have on the staff at least one person thoroughly trained in Economics or Economic History. This does not seem to me absolutely essential, for most broadly trained historians or political scientists should easily recognize the importance of economic problems and evaluate the documents relating to those questions. I would seem to me that persons with a broad training and experience in research, who could be shifted easily from one area to another as the need arises, are highly desirable, together with a number who may be area specialists. But I strongly urge that every effort be made to secure substantial additions to the staff.

12. Conclusions. There is little that need be added to the comments already made. I may, however, emphasize these points:

(a) There should be no effort to interfere with the individual approach which each compiler must make to his own subject. It might, however, be desirable to have somewhat more direction, consultation, and coordination with respect to the entire task. This should serve to ensure the appropriate emphasis on the various subjects.

(b) The general examination and use of papers outside the Central Files--Post and Lot Files within the State Department, the White House papers, and the papers of other agencies--should be encouraged, although the extent of use must, of course, vary according to the subject. I would suggest also that editorial notes and annotations referring to memoirs and first-hand accounts might well be used to fill in gaps in the regular volumes, as they have been used particularly in the Conference volumes.

(c) I should very much like to see the chronological List of Papers, discontinued in 1937, restored. This would make possible some further rearrangement of the documents.

(d) Attention might well be given to the subject-matter arrangement. I personally prefer this arrangement to the completely chronological, but the classifications might well be broadened into fewer subjects.

(e) Finally, I would reemphasize that the crucial problems are those of clearance and staff, and even an enlarged staff would be hampered if there is no solution to clearance.

In conclusion, I must express my appreciation of the unfailing courtesy and genuine cooperation I received from every member of the staff during this assignment.

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